

NSC BRIEFING

5 April 1955

# THE ASIAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE

I. The Asian-African conference which is being sponsored by the five Colombo powers (India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, and Indonesia) will convene in Bandung, Indonesia, on 18 April.

A. In all, twenty-nine countries, including Communist China and North Vietnam and containing more than a half of the world's population, will be represented. The only country invited that did not accept was the Central African Federation.

B. In making up the invitation list, the sponsors adopted no clear-cut qualifications. Consequently, the invitees are--even in Nehru's view--"an odd assortment." The nearest thing to a common denominator we can find is the experience of practically all participants of being subjected to Western imperialism in one form or another within the past hundred years.

C. In this connection, Burmese Premier Nu has been quoted as saying that the conference would not be "anti-West, but if we discuss colonialism we may have some disparaging remarks about colonial powers and those are mostly Western powers." Nehru's recent outburst against the West in the Indian parliament illustrates the

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DOCUMENT NO.

NO CHANGE IN CLASS.

LI DECLASSIFIED

CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS 5

NEXT REVIEW DATE:

DATE: 2 Jan 88

REVIEWER:

emotionalism of Nationalist Asian leaders which might erupt at Bandung, although Nehru himself may well have cooled off by then and be more circumspect in "mixed company."

D. In view of all this, it is interesting to note that English has been adopted as the official language of the conference.

II. Although the purposes of the Conference were announced in Dec. '54, no agenda has yet been adopted. In fact, there is a good deal of disagreement among the sponsors in their efforts to draw up a provisional one.

A. India is pressing for consideration of the following topics:

1. Promotion of world peace and co-operation--coexistence.
2. Progress in Indochina.
3. Racial discrimination and racial problems.
4. Problem of dependent people.
5. Nuclear energy, in war and peace.
6. Programs of economic development and co-operation in Asian-African region.
7. Cultural co-operation.
8. Desirability of holding cultural festivals in participating countries on appropriate occasions.

Approved For Release 2003/08/26 : CIA-RDP79R00890A000500040002-6

**B. The Indians can count on the support of the neutralist  
Burmese and Indonesians for an agenda along these  
lines. Ceylon and Pakistan, however, have different  
ideas.**

- 1. Ceylong, for instance, wants to discuss such topics  
as international communism and regional defense,  
which do not appeal in the least to the neutralists.**
- 2. For its part, Pakistan visualizes itself as the  
leader of the pro-Western countries and Premier  
Ali has expressed interest in introducing items  
that will counter the Indian proposals.**

**C. There are indications that the agenda problem is being  
resolved by neutralist insistence that topics conform  
to the announced purposes of the conference, which  
strongly reflect the Indian viewpoint.**

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**B. The two Communist participants are sending strong delegations.**

- 1. Communist China will be represented by 24 official delegates, under the leadership of Premier Chou En-lai.**

2. The Viet Minh reportedly is sending a 15-man group under the leadership of either Ho Chi Minh or the Vice Premier and Foreign Minister, Phan Van Dong, who played a prominent role as leader of the Viet Minh delegation at Geneva.

C. Another measure of Communist expectations is the large number of newsmen they will have at Bandung. Altogether, there will be 12 TASS men, 2 representatives, of the London Daily Worker and 20-30 Chinese reporters.

D. Meanwhile, Peiping has launched a large-scale propaganda campaign concerning the conference. The main themes of this propaganda have been Asian solidarity, co-existence and US malevolence.

E. The Communists also have an opportunity for a "dry run" at the "Asian Conference for the Relaxation of International Tensions" which opened yesterday in New Delhi. This meeting is sponsored by the Communist-front All-Indian Peace Council and is attended by nearly a score of Asian and African countries, as well as the USSR.

Approved For Release 2003/08/26 : CIA-RDP79R00890A0009600040002-6

1. Although the "delegations" at New Delhi are "unofficial" leftist groups, most will be "representing" countries which are sending official governmental delegations to Bandung.
2. Significantly, the agenda of the New Delhi conference covers much the same ground as will probably be examined at Bandung.

F. Burmese Premier Nu has provided the Communists with an excellent opportunity to do some pre-conference lobbying by inviting both Chou and Ho Chi Minh to visit Rangoon a few days before the conference.

1. Nehru, travelling in company with the entire Egyptian and Afghan delegations, is expected in Rangoon on 15 April.
2. Nu has proposed that all six groups proceed to Bandung together.

IV. Despite these Communist advantages, the outlook for the West is not all bad. Twenty-one of the twenty-nine participants are strongly anti-Communist. Of these, twelve are closely linked to the West.

A. Moreover, the pro-Western countries will be represented by such able and eloquent spokesmen as Carlos Romulo of the Philippines, Mohamad Ali of Pakistan, Prince Wan of Thailand, Jamali of Iraq, and probably Charles Malik of Lebanon.

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**B. Another possibility favorable to the West is the prospect for development of Sino-Indian rivalry at Bandung. Despite Nehru's recent attack on the West, it is not believed that he would welcome a Chinese Communist effort to steal the show.**

**1. Nehru probably can be expected to resist any effort by Peiping to dominate the conference.**

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